

An analysis of the management of packaging within New Product Development: An investigation in the UK food and drinks sectors

Sponsored by Chesapeake Corp.

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Submitted September 2012

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This thesis is submitted to the University of Portsmouth for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Portsmouth for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. A bibliography/reference is appended.

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available online.

Signed.....

Christopher Don Simms

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my Director of Studies, Professor Paul Trott, both for his guidance and encouragement. His support has been of great help with respect to both my PhD thesis and career in general. I have been extremely fortunate to work closely with such an inspiring and supportive individual. I would like to thank him for making it an enjoyable experience.

In addition, I would also like to thank my other supervisors, Professor Colin Wheeler and Dr. Mark Lowman. Their guidance and comments have been of great help throughout the process. More generally, I would like to thank those other members of staff within the Human Resources and Marketing Management Department who have provided me with guidance, support, and encouragement.

I would like to specifically thank Carol Hammond, Director of Research and Development at Chesapeake Corp. Carol's assistance and comments have been extremely valuable throughout the process, and have provided unique insights that have shaped the design of the project. In addition, I would also like to thank the other contributors to the research: the interviewees involved in its first stage; and individuals who have contributed to the case studies. Without the insights provided by these contributors, this project would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank my parents, Nick and Jill, and my close family, and to express my thanks to my partner, who has had to endure the 'ups and downs' throughout the research process. Without the personal support of these individuals, the PhD would have been a much less enjoyable experience.

Abstract

Packaging plays a key role in product success within the highly competitive food and drinks sectors of the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Industry. However, relatively little has been written about packaging in the marketing management literature. The majority of published research focuses on the marketing communications aspects of packaging. As a result, whilst there is substantial literature revealing the significance of packaging in purchasing decisions and perceptions of the product, its role in product development and the creation of new opportunities has been largely overlooked. Against this background, the research examines the management of packaging development within the FMCG industry: in particular, the food and drinks sectors. The purpose of the study is twofold: to examine how the development of a new product's packaging is managed and integrated into the new product development (NPD) process of firms; and to explore how firms in the industry manage the opportunities that new packaging development may provide.

The research finds that in their packaging development, most firms focus on 'skin-deep' issues, such as the development of the label, and aesthetic modifications to the body of the packaging, such as changing the colour of a bottle. The analysis reveals three distinct levels of packaging development and argues that the development of new packaging formats and genuine packaging innovation is being overlooked by firms. The framework developed from the research reveals that the orientation of packaging development (skin-deep, aesthetic body modifications, or technological format change) is influenced by internal packaging capability, perceptions of the production process, the role of buyers, and concerns over the impact of changes on the product's retailing. This in turn impacts on the role of the consumer and suppliers in development.

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing new insight into the relationship between packaging development and NPD. The framework generated contributes to the existing stage based models of NPD by revealing that previous research has largely failed to analyse packaging development at the level of technological and format change. The findings also have implications for firms, identifying a need to re-examine their packaging development activities, to ensure that these address all three levels; not merely 'skin-deep' packaging.

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